



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant Colfax, MD  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

# Director's Report for Health Commission Meeting of February 1, 2022

*A current overview of issues affecting the state of public health in San Francisco*

<https://www.dph.org/dph/comupg/aboutdph/insideDept/dirRpts/default.asp>

*Today, there are over 104,800 San Francisco residents with confirmed cases of COVID-19. And, sadly, a total of 710 San Franciscans have died. The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) sends our condolences to their loved ones.*

### **Changes to COVID-19 Health Order—indoor masking, testing and vaccination requirements**

Beginning on February 1, San Francisco office workers, gym members and other “stable cohorts” of people may remove masks indoors again, reinstating the mask exemption that was in place before the latest Omicron surge. Given the highly transmissible nature of the variant, there is an additional requirement that individuals in these stable cohort groups be “up to date” on their vaccinations, including the primary series and boosters when eligible, as the best protection against the virus.

Other COVID-19 safety guidelines in these settings remain in effect and include a means for others who do not or cannot meet the vaccination requirements to join the group with the added safety of showing a negative test and wearing a mask.

Additional updates begin a new shift in bringing San Francisco’s Safer Together Health Order into closer alignment with current California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requirements, where it can be done safely. These include allowing patrons to enter indoor “mega-events” of 500 people or more with a negative COVID-19 test as an alternative to being “up to date” on vaccinations (masking would still be required). Further changes allow religious and medical exemptions to vaccination requirements with a negative COVID-19 test, affecting locations such as indoor restaurants, bars, gyms, fitness centers, and other venues where food or drink is consumed or where people have elevated breathing. These changes also begin February 1. The public should be mindful that people in some settings may not be fully vaccinated or boosted and so should use good judgment when attending gatherings or events.

Consistent with the state’s current mask rules, San Francisco’s indoor mask mandate remains in effect for most public settings, regardless of vaccination status. For more details on the changes to the health order, go to: [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders)

Rapid antigen tests may be taken within the day before entry, and PCR laboratory tests may be taken within two days before entry. A photo taken of a self-administered rapid antigen test (such as an at-home test) is not acceptable proof of a negative test. Verification of the test result from a third party is needed. For these events and locations, a printed or electronic document from the test provider or



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laboratory may be used.

The health order also added a definition for “booster-eligible,” which means the time when a person qualifies to receive a booster under U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Until a person is eligible for a booster, they are considered “up to date” on their vaccination. More information about booster eligibility can be found at: [sf.gov/information/get-your-booster](https://sf.gov/information/get-your-booster).

Clarification has also been provided on when a person may receive a vaccination or booster following a COVID-19 infection. While clinical data does not yet provide a definitive answer to this question, for now the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) recommends that people get vaccinated or receive a booster dose as soon as possible at least 10 days but no more than 30 days after recovery from infection and discontinuation of isolation, unless a healthcare provider has a strong reason for the booster to be delayed.

Additional changes to the health order affect personnel in high-risk settings and include:

- Extending the deadline a month from February 1 to March 1 for personnel in high-risk settings to be up-to-date on vaccination, meaning receiving a booster shot when eligible. The extension of the deadline aligns with state requirements, but also includes San Francisco’s health order requirements on boosters for people whose regular work hours are outside of designated high-risk settings, but who visit high-risk settings as part of their work (such as many police officers, paramedics, and deputy sheriffs working in jails)

### **Data shows COVID-19 cases in SF in decline following Omicron-driven surge**

COVID-19 cases are dropping rapidly following the highest peak in the two-year pandemic. Data shows that cases peaked on Jan. 9 with a 7-day average of 2,164 cases per day and have steadily dropped each day since then to 1,076 cases per day on Jan. 12. COVID-19 hospitalizations, which trail a peak in cases, are expected to peak in the next few days at a level that remains within the health care system’s bed capacity.

Nevertheless, cases remain extremely high due to the Omicron-fueled surge. People, especially those at higher risk for complications from COVID-19, should continue to be cautious over the next several weeks by layering their defenses, such as upgrading masks to N95 or double layer masks (cloth on top of surgical), improving ventilation, testing when recommended, and staying home if sick or symptomatic. Vaccinations and boosters, when eligible, remain the most effective tool to protect oneself against the virus.

Hospitalizations in San Francisco mirror national trends that show the vast majority, about 80%, are among people who are not up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations, including unvaccinated and vaccinated but not boosted individuals.



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### COVID-19 resources:

- For a list of vaccination and booster sites in San Francisco: [sf.gov/getvaccinated](https://sf.gov/getvaccinated)
- For a list of testing sites in San Francisco: [sf.gov/gettested](https://sf.gov/gettested)
- For Isolation and Quarantine guidelines: [sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp](https://sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp)
- More SF COVID data can be found here: [sf.gov/resource/2021/covid-19-data-and-reports](https://sf.gov/resource/2021/covid-19-data-and-reports)

### **DPH joins City Departments and community leaders to open Tenderloin Linkage Center**

On Tuesday, January 18, 2022, initial operations commenced at the Tenderloin Linkage Center (TLC). The newly opened Tenderloin Linkage Center is an essential component of San Francisco's Tenderloin Emergency Initiative that is forging a path to promote a thriving community and save lives through overdose prevention and connecting people to care and services.

The Emergency Initiative is a 90-day operation run much like the COVID-19 Response, a multi-agency coordinated effort, led by the Department of Emergency Management (DEM). The Emergency Initiative has the following vision: A safer and healthier Tenderloin neighborhood with more effective connections to services for housed and unhoused residents, reduced overdose deaths, reduced crime and sidewalk hazards, and increased investments in long-term neighborhood coordination between City and non-City agencies. The stated public health goals under the Initiative are to 1) decrease overdose deaths and 2) decrease public drug usage.

The newly opened Linkage Center, located at 1172 Market Street, is currently operating seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with plans to expand to operate 24 hours-a-day. Capacity is limited for COVID safety safe precautions, although we are still welcoming over 200 guests a day. During the first week of operation, the Center hosted 1,180 visits with 268 meaningful engagements, 187 referrals, 11 pending linkages, and three completed linkages. Naloxone was administered three times. Anecdotally, TLC has been very well received by guests with lines upon opening and repeat guests.

TLC is a services-focused location designed to provide a safe, welcoming space for those in need of respite and for those interested in accessing San Francisco's health and human service resources easily and quickly.

The Center takes a "radical hospitality" approach with laundry, showers, a warm meal, and drop-in model. Weekly wellness programs will also be hosted here to provide services like COVID-19 vaccination and testing as well as HIV and Hepatitis C testing.

TLC is operated in coordination with Urban Alchemy and HealthRight 360, with support from several other CBOs and onsite support from the DPH, DEM, and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH).



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The new Tenderloin Linkage Center will connect people to short- and long-term services, care, and programs. Programs and services include, but are not limited to:

- Behavioral health care
- Shelter
- Transitional housing
- Housing assistance
- Homeward bound
- Withdrawal management
- Substance use treatment
- Food coordination
- Vocational support
- Therapy and mentoring
- Child and family care
- Veteran support

People can self-present to the Center or arrive via vehicle or foot escort from a community partner, if requested. If City outreach teams, first responders or community service providers encounter people on the street who may benefit from this Center, they can call upon a health or social services partner to provide more information and an escort to the site, if desired. People may come and go freely to and from the Center.

The next step for TLC is expanding to operate 24/7, increasing capacity, adding additional wellness programming, including health fairs, and expanding to use the second floor of the building. Learning what is most important to our guests and how to improve the Linkage Center. For more information on the Tenderloin Linkage Center, visit [sf.gov/location/tenderloin-linkage-center](https://sf.gov/location/tenderloin-linkage-center)

For more information on the Tenderloin Emergency Initiative, including weekly situation reports, visit [sf.gov/TenderloinInitiative](https://sf.gov/TenderloinInitiative).

### **SF extends COVID Right to Recover program**

On January 21, Mayor London N. Breed and Supervisor Hillary Ronen announced that San Francisco will allocate an additional \$5.4 million from the City's General Fund to extend the Right to Recover Program through the end of June 2022 to meet the current surge in applications. The extended Program will continue the support of COVID-19 positive San Franciscans who are in need of financial assistance while self-isolating and recovering from the virus.

Established in July 2020 in collaboration with Supervisor Hillary Ronen, Right to Recover is a partnership between the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), University of California San Francisco (UCSF), and



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community-based organizations, Mission Economic Development Agency and Young Community Developers. The Program aims to protect public health and ensure that a lack of financial resources does not deter anyone from getting tested, seeking care, and entering isolation. The Program originally provided 14 days of financial support of \$1,285 to workers, however OEWD has adjusted the payment amount to \$1,000 to align with updated CDC guidelines recommending 10 days of isolation.

Since its establishment, the City has directed \$10.9 million to the Program, serving 7,037 San Franciscans to date, with 75% of the recipients residing in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic. This includes the Excelsior and OMI, Mission, Bayview, Visitacion Valley, Tenderloin, and SoMa. The \$5.4 million extension will serve approximately 5,400 more San Franciscans. Total combined program funding of \$16.3 million will serve over 13,800 residents recovering from COVID-19.

Right to Recover was created to offer a safety net for people who face financial hardship and lack access to benefits such as unemployment insurance or paid sick leave while in isolation following a positive COVID-19 test result. Approximately 46% of program participants are Spanish speakers. English speakers makeup 43% of referrals, followed by 11% of participants who speak languages other than Spanish and English, including Cantonese, Russian, and Arabic, or an unidentified preferred language.

When a person tests positive for COVID-19, SFDPH contacts that person and offers resources based on their needs. SFDPH refers individuals requesting financial assistance in order to safely isolate to OEWD and its community partners Mission Economic Development Agency and Young Community Developers for a Program intake. The City does not ask or record any questions about citizenship or immigration status.

If you or a family member tested positive for COVID, and are interested in the Right to Recover Program, please contact the San Francisco Department of Public Health COVID Resource Center at (628) 217-6101 to receive a Program referral.

For more information on the Right to Recover Program, call the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) Workforce Hotline at (415) 701-4817, where representatives are available Monday through Friday to answer calls in multiple languages, or email [workforce.connection@sfgov.org](mailto:workforce.connection@sfgov.org). People can also visit [oewd.org/covid19/workers](https://oewd.org/covid19/workers) to learn more.

### **SF drug overdoses decline for the first time in three years**

On January 19, DPH announced preliminary findings showing that accidental overdose deaths in 2021 were 7% lower than 2020, representing the first decline since 2018. The [preliminary findings](#) are based on data from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) and conclude a year's worth of monthly reports on accidental overdoses in the City.



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The year-over-year decline from 700 deaths in 2020 to 650 deaths in 2021 are a sign that the City's record high number of overdoses in recent years may be leveling off with the support of new City investments in substance use treatment, mental health, housing and other services, among additional factors. The City's overdose prevention efforts are designed to have impact by lowering the barriers to treatments and services and encouraging safer use practices that are proven to reduce the risk associated with drug use. The data from 2021 and 2020 categorize overdoses slightly differently, which is why there are variations in annual overdose numbers.

The 2021 preliminary data from OCME has been released alongside a new, detailed [report](#) on Substance Use Trends in San Francisco through 2020, analyzing the impacts of drug overdoses in San Francisco in 2020. The findings of the 2020 report points to fentanyl as the main driver of overdose mortality, especially among younger people and Black/African Americans. Efforts like the distribution of naloxone, the opioid overdose-reversing medication, through community organizations like the Drug Overdose Prevention and Education (DOPE) Project and City services reversed more than 4,300 overdose deaths in 2020. Between January 1 and September 30, 2021, community partners and City services distributed 28,000 naloxone kits, reversing more than 6,800 overdoses. The City will continue to meet distribution demands in 2022.

San Francisco will also open a drug sobering center, called SoMa RISE, this year as a safe space for people who are intoxicated to come inside and be connected to services. Additional overdose prevention efforts planned for 2022 include an expansion of the Street Overdose Response Team, which provides an immediate response and then follow-up care to people who have recently survived an overdose and are most at risk of another one, and opening California's first safe consumption site.

Overdose deaths in San Francisco began a rapid rise in 2018 due to the arrival of fentanyl in the illicit drug supply, an opioid that is 50 times more potent than heroin and can kill a person in seconds. The COVID-19 pandemic added to the dangers of drug use because people were more often using alone. In response, the City intensified its overdose prevention response, adding new resources that specifically target people experiencing homelessness, who are among those at highest risk.

### **In 2020 and 2021, the City and community partners launched and expanded overdose prevention efforts, including:**

- Expanded hours and services at the Community Behavioral Health Services Pharmacy at 1380 Howard Street, including delivering treatment to Shelter in Place (SIP) sites and telemedicine.
- Added 88 new drug and mental health treatment beds as part of Mayor Breed's plan to add 400 new spaces through Mental Health SF.



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- Launched the Street Overdose Response (SORT) team in August 2021 to provide care and support for people at high risk of overdose. SORT has already responded to over 750 calls to date.
- Launched the SRO Overdose Prevention Program, providing targeted outreach and intervention for individuals living in SROs.
- Set up over 150 low-barrier naloxone stations in over 30 shelter in place sites.
- Launched the DPH Clearing House to distribute naloxone both to community partners and directly to individuals with the plan to distribute 28,000 naloxone kits annually.
- Passed legislation requiring frontline City employees with DPH, the Department of Emergency Response (DEM), the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), and the San Francisco Human Services Agency (HAS) to receive training in naloxone use and overdose reversal.

Mayor Breed and DPH are committed to further decreasing overdose deaths in 2022 by completing the implementation of Mental Health SF, overhauling San Francisco's mental health system for all San Franciscans who lack insurance or who are experiencing homelessness, expanding access to treatment, including medication treatment and contingency management, expanding proven overdose prevention methods, and increasing community engagement and education.

### **The following overdose prevention initiatives are underway and will launch or expand in 2022:**

- Expansion of new beds and treatment facilitates, including opening the drug sobering center, SoMa RISE.
- Expansion of the Street Overdose Response Team to include peer specialists and additional teams so that the Street Overdose Response Team can maintain a caseload of 700 individuals.
- Opening California's first safe consumption site.
- Launching initiatives so that San Francisco Fire Department paramedics can provide the addiction medicine treatment buprenorphine in the field.
- Launching a fentanyl test strip program, which will be accessible through syringe access programs.
- Launching a five-year project to support the health of San Francisco's Black/African American residents called the Culturally Congruent and Innovative Practice for Black/African American Communities, serving Black/African American residents with mental health needs.

DPH and the OCME will continue to collect and analyze substance use data throughout the City to better allocate resources and invest in overdose prevention and treatment programming that reflects the needs of each community.

### **Key findings from the [2020 Substance Trends Report](#):**



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- Overdose deaths continue to be driven by the powerful opioid fentanyl and related analogs, often in combination with cocaine or methamphetamine.
- 89 percent of opioid overdose deaths in 2020 were attributed to fentanyl. Deaths involving fentanyl tend to occur more among younger persons than deaths not involving fentanyl.
- Admissions to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment programs for fentanyl increased substantially in 2020, as did the overall number of people treated for opioid use disorder with buprenorphine. San Francisco did see a further decline in the overall number of admissions and unique persons admitted to SUD treatment programs. The most recent decline is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic but is also likely made up by increasing numbers of people receiving buprenorphine outside SUD treatment programs.
- Males, persons aged 50 to 59 years, and Black/African Americans had the highest rates of overdose mortality related to opioids, methamphetamine, and cocaine/crack. SUD treatment program admissions were highest among males and Black/African Americans for all substances.
- Drug overdose mortality tends to be concentrated in the Tenderloin, South of Market, and Mission neighborhoods of San Francisco

### Safety Tips

If you use drugs or if you know people who use drugs, it is recommended that you carry naloxone for your safety and the safety of others. Naloxone is covered by Medi-Cal, Healthy San Francisco, and most health plans. It can be obtained from the Community Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) Pharmacy at 1380 Howard Street on a walk-in basis with no prescription required, Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Chinese New Year healthy cooking symposium

On January 29, Catherine Wong, RD, MPH, Nutrition Manager of DPH Chinatown Public Health Center, hosted a Chinese New Year healthy cooking symposium with celebrity chef Martin Yan. Chef Yan shared healthy cooking skills with participating community members, and Catherine shared key messages related to the 2021-2025 Dietary Guidelines. The symposium also included a presentation from Chiropractor Joana DeRosa on Chinese meridians and tapping exercises. Thank you, Catherine, for organizing this event to promote healthy eating and active living in the community!

### Recognizing DPH Occupational Health staff

In an initiative to create relevant safety material which managers and supervisors can readily share with their staff, Gemma Cohen of DPH Occupational Safety and Health has started preparing a new newsletter, "Bee Safe Monthly Buzz", the first edition of which was distributed at ZSFG. The newsletter is split into two topics, each of which can be presented at a separate staff meeting or team huddle. To help high-injury locations, such as the Emergency Department, Gemma has also



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developed infographics showing injury data for the specific location in an easy-to-understand format. Thank you, Gemma, for your important contributions to the safety of our frontline staff!

### [DPH in the News](#)



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**LAGUNA HONDA HOSPITAL AND REHABILITATION CENTER**

**January 2022**

**Health Commission - Director of Health Report**

(January 6, 2022 Medical Exec Committee)

	January	(FY 2021-2022) Year-to-Date
<b>New Appointments</b>	1	12
Reinstatements	0	0
<b>Reappointments</b>	2	29
Delinquencies:	0	0
Reappointment Denials:	0	0
<b>Resigned/Retired/Separated</b>	1	10
<b>Disciplinary Actions</b>	0	0
<b>Restriction/Limitation-Privileges</b>	0	0
<b>Deceased</b>	0	1
<b>Changes in Privileges</b>		
Additions	0	0
Voluntary Relinquishments	0	0
Proctorship Completed	2	3
Proctorship Extension	0	0

<b>Current Statistics – as of 1/04/2022</b>	
Active Medical Staff	36
As-Needed Medical Staff	14
External Consultant Medical Staff	45
Courtesy Medical Staff	2



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Affiliated Health Practitioners	8
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>105</b>

<b>Applications in Process</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Applications Withdrawn this month</b>	<b>0</b>